

banging of rifle-butts against the hatches and the shouts of the prisoners started afresh and acted as incentives to fiercer exertions. A voice cried out from below,

"Mac! You've got th' upper hand. Let's divide th' skins an' call quits."

"No, no, Captain Olsen!" answered McDonald sarcastically. "You're too kind. They belong ter me an' my friends, an' why sh'd I give you any? Besides, seals are plentiful around th' Crozets an' Kerguelen. Arter ye've made a trip thar ye'll make yer fortune an' settle down ashore. Them's yer own words to th' noospaper in Halifax. No, no, me bird! I'll take 'em all—ye'll be able ter catch us easy when ye're flyin' light."

A volley of impotent curses greeted this sally, and Mac laughed easily.

While the last bundles of pelts were being hove aboard of the *Roberta*, McDonald went around the sealing schooner with an ax. With a blow he smashed the compass to flinders, and striding to the mainsail halliards, he cut them and hauled the ends through the blocks. The main-sheet he chopped through in several places, and a few telling cuts put the wheel-gear out of business. Simons, with a fisherman's bait-knife, severed the forestaysail halliards and cut all the lanyards of the standing rigging.

When the last bundle was hove aboard, McDonald yelled:

"For th' vessel, now, fellers! Jump!"

With a rush the fishermen piled aboard of their vessel.

"Up on yer foresail!" yelled Simons, and McDonald with the ax cut through the manila fishing hawser and cast the *Topsail Belle* adrift.

The sealing schooner had drifted to leeward but